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Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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other such "old English reading," in which coarseness is garnished by wit and fancy and beautiful language. The very thought is warning enough against indiscriminate reading. In old times, however, the restrictions imposed upon a girl's reading by careful parents are often amusing to look back upon, from these free and easy days. I remember being given the three volumes of *The Fairchild Family*, that pious and didactic work, with the injunction not to read the third volume until I was sixteen, as it was "far too old for me." And yet I, in common with most English children, was encouraged to study for myself in those immature days, the books of the Old Testament, containing besides the record of all sorts of crimes, the moral code of the Jewish nation, by no means necessary for religious instruction. I venture to think that though extreme childhood may, in its innocence and ignorance, hear, read and speak of, with impunity, such subjects, it is not so when womanhood begins to dawn; the sleep-walker may scale a giddy height, unharmed, until suddenly awakened.

(To be continued.)

ON LABOUR OF THE HANDS.

BY NEIL WYNN WILLIAMS.

Author of "The Bayonet that Came Home," etc.

MAN differentiates himself from man by a growth towards material prosperity. In proportion as he is prosperous, he ceases to use his hands for purposes of manual toil; and if he should labour in any way, labours with his brain. Extremes meet: the uncivilised and the super-civilised savouring of their respective prosperities encounter one another upon that common ground of opinion, which is carpeted with a haughty contempt for soil-stained hands. Wealth, and the education of wealth, are theirs: power, and the honours of power, are theirs: they possess an environment peculiar to themselves, and those others are without its pale. Granted! But the position is not exhausted with its genesis. It must be maintained. Brain power of itself is insufficient to the purpose, it calls in the aid of the hand. Thereby, it admits a dependency in degree. And negatives to reason, the assumption of a lofty superiority, that would separate itself both in sentiment and daily life from the handling of a tool or the removal of a jacket.

In an age devoted to a fierce pursuit of intellectual education, one which sees thousands divorced from the labours of the field by a wealth of machinery, there is growing up a widespread distaste towards purely manual labour as a life's vocation, or as a life's assistance towards an honest independence. Affirmations abound that even the carking difficulties of the period will not induce the farmer to place his hands to the plough, or his wife and daughters to quit their luxurious cult of the intellect for the more elemental study of the dairy. And a glib reason, with a too sweeping application, is advanced by the farmer to rot these affirmations into the manure of a national sympathy for his otherwise hard case. He must direct, he must supervise: but if he use his hands it is to waste his time and his energy which could be better employed elsewhere. It is an argument which

would forbid on emergency the officer to make use of the private's rifle; and it ignores all those object lessons of hard manual labour and detailed thrift which were admirably exemplified to their minds by the successful yeomen of a past generation. Does the farmer believe in it himself? Do his wife and his daughters, as they hand him a strenuously earned examination certificate, which is valued in the employment market at the price of waste paper? Nowadays, more especially, false sentiment assumes to itself the support of a distorted logic. The farmer but follows or anticipates the example of the advertising faddist and the crotcheter-monger. He ignores manual labour in his own person; but he joins in the public outcry against the growing disinclination of the many to enter upon domestic service. That *these* should be above the coarser labour of the hands, should turn to the modelling of the alpacas and smart merinos of a lowest rate millinery, would appear to him to be a problem of action easily resolved to its original factor of an intense stupidity. And he would blow aside with a full breathed laugh the flimsy stilts of a betterment of condition and greater individual freedom.

It is a peculiarity of "class," as well as of the individual, to assimilate so much of current opinion as would appear to be suited to its requirements—real or imaginary. Hence it comes about, that the excessive importance attached by the cry of the hour to the education of the intellect as a means of social advancement is understood by the illiterate not always to their own advantage. They take it that the road to position does and can only lie through the schools; and biassed by the haughty attitude of the class above towards manual labour, they conceive a distaste for it, that impels them by thousands into the ill-paid ranks of those who wear broadcloth, and grow thin under the tyranny of a low pen. Nor is this all: they clamour under the spur of a blind form of democratic opinion for further facilities of obtaining a divorce from the soil or the workshop. They would wish to be more liberally prepared to compete for position upon the level of a fair examination field and no favour, with the white-handed ones of a lowest capital. And they are upheld and encouraged in their endeavours by a short-sighted educational authority, that would stimulate their educational amour to a

febrile unhealthiness, accompanied by painful discontent with the Past, the Present, and vague Future. They desire *Position*, a laudable and righteous ambition for an Englishman; but do they attain to it by this road, or can they win more easily to it by another and more direct route—a route that is nationally the safer, because the less accented by hill and artificial bridging? Two examples of success, though crudely drawn, will carry their own interpretation.

A and B are sons of a bricklayer, who are gathered in due time into the fold of an elementary school. A, by dint of talent, diligence, and much self-denial, mounts the rungs of the educational ladder till he becomes the pride of his master, and is persuaded that it is for his future weifare that he should continue his education at a secondary school of higher intellectual calibre. B, equally clever and steady, keeps step with his brother, but parts with him at the door of the secondary school. For B decides upon being apprenticed to a builder. A secures an exhibition at the secondary school, again by dint of severe work, and under the strain of a penurious economy. Later, he secures an open exhibition at a college. And he goes to Cambridge, upon the financial strength of the two exhibitions that he has won. There he carries off a scholarship, and finally takes a good degree.

To return to B. He serves his apprenticeship. He applies all his energies to his trade, and to the securing of trade knowledge. In time, he sets up business on his own account, with a modicum of capital provided by the work of his hands as well as by his brain. And he is making a comfortable living, with a still finer prospect before him, at the period when his brother A has just completed the collegiate course.

A has now exhausted, or almost exhausted, the little capital that he has been able to rake together from exhibition, scholarship, and the hard work of private tuition. He must select a profession, and quickly. There are two which envisage him: the clerical, and the scholastic. He selects the latter, and he is exceptionally fortunate in securing a post, whose stipend commences at £250 per annum. But his income never exceeds at any future period of his life the sum of £800 a year. It is a respectable position, and he marries and has children upon it; but it must be heavily discounted (cruelly enough) in the eyes of society—the barometer of

position—by an unfortunate facility for dropping the letter “aitch,” which he contracted in early childhood.

Again, to return to B. He surpasses the stage of making a living, proportionate to the slender capital that he has amassed by qualities which he holds in common with his brother. He grows gradually rich, he marries, and takes up, now here, now there, a contract upon a large scale. Eventually, he becomes a man who measures his income by thousands of pounds sterling, who retires from business, who sends his eldest son to a Public School, and who is described as “of” such and such a country seat. He is offered a knighthood and accepts it. Society smiles, for the good man is “aitchless”: nevertheless it is very willing to attend his dinner parties, for his champagne is of unimpeachable quality, and his thousands gild him with an importance of wealth.

In the education of a class, whether upon technical or more strictly intellectual lines, there is invariably induced a surplusage of knowledge beyond the requirements of the plain utility demanded by every-day life. Men of ability or exceptional energy, feeding kindly upon the technical or mental pabulum placed before them, will grow to a greater stature than their comrades. It is they, of their class, who will become capitalists of this surplusage—yclept culture; and who, according to their investment of the same, will advance or retard the progress of the human race towards the standard of highest refinement. The responsibility of initiative that pertains thus indirectly to educational authority is an extremely serious one, and as often as not it finds itself confronted in the sequel with a discontent of possession that it is powerless to allay, but which nevertheless applies to it for relief as by right; or, to descend from the abstract to the concrete, it is compelled to own paternity to the birth of a *taste* for which there is not and cannot be any due provision of a grazing-ground.

The principles upon which the production of a “cultured” humanity, should rest, are worthy of a scansion. They should be embodied in that broad theory of improvement which seeks to develop not only man’s moral and intellectual knowledge, but also the cunning of his hand. And with a translation of the theory into an active educational force, regard should be forcefully had of that sure arrival at a boundary where culture

should arise, self-supporting, and self-sufficient. Any system of education that gives birth to a culture too luxurious to exist comfortably in the atmosphere of the class in which it is called into being, has travelled with a heavy bias in the direction of a knowledge unsuited to that class. It has failed of its theory, and is as criminally responsible towards the State, as if it had entirely withheld its gifts of knowledge.

It is essential, therefore, to the production of “culture,” that its threefold nature as regards humanity at large should be primarily recognised. For culture, definitely applied to class, then becomes a term relative to the class knowledge already existent. And the existence of a highest intellectual, or moral, or purely physical wisdom, cannot reasonably refuse the imposition of a culture of other kind. Viewed by this light, the assumption by the intellectually educated of the title, “The cultured class,” may be cut down to the fallacious impertinence, which it is; and an argument for the practical study of “Labour of the Hands” may be profitably perpended.

It has been shown that the application of culture to class should be limited by a consideration of the ways and means that the class environment is able to supply for its support. Now, what is the position of the highly educated class as compared to that of the illiterate? Physically, the transparency and limitations of the greenhouse, as compared to the open vault of heaven. But intellectually, the position of reasoning man as compared to unreasoning animal. The physical position entails a delicacy of body: the intellectual one, a robustness of mind. Entirely limit the “culture” of such a class to intellect, and the nerves of its body will refuse to perform their office, now here, now there. Force it to the point of neurotic disease, then palliate the mischief with outdoor sport and pastime. Strain a high civilization towards a too high civilization, and from the wreck of a national body, there will issue a cry of “back to the soil.” But initiate, as well as an exquisite culture of the mind, a calisthenics of the greenhouse (a playful copy of manual labour and the cynic will); and the body will be strengthened to the strengthening of the mind; and humanity at large will gather from the double culture, a wider knowledge, a grander sympathy.

To gaze at an object is to receive an impression of that object; whilst to *grasp* it, gives birth in the mind to that

definiteness which constitutes a vigorous reality. The gentleman, as he observes the peasant who digs, connotes the peasant's action with his previous experience of a similar impression, and he will judge the quality of the delver's work to a measure of accuracy. But let him take the spade into his own hand, and there comes to him in waves, an enlightenment of detail which cannot prove but broadly useful to him as master, and to the peasant as servant. The very atmosphere about him will rise or fall to the temperature with which it has laved the straining body of the labourer. He will observe in the soil the root or bedded stone, and, cleaning his spade with a sharp-edged flint, will minutely study the consistency of the clinging clod. He will "trench" to the information of his unpractised eye, and mark the resultant and wavering furrow. He will measure the passage of the hours by the knotting muscles of his back. And as his trousers "bag," his coat grows superfluous, there will come to him a respect for even corduroy and hob-nailed boots.

But the position eventuates further than its labour of muscle, its toil of breath—these latter must be apportioned to a time-scale. And sunlight and shadow acquire a new significance to him as they drift across the field. He becomes conscious of a task, and he measures the ground before him by the resistance that it will offer to his languid spade. He strains that he may perform it. Scrash! The ash handle of his spade treacherously breaks above the iron haft. The ragged wood sears his hand with a burning pang. The red blood spurts forth. He has learnt many things. Ay! even to the old, yet ever new lesson—the reality of pain.

To handle the rake for the first time is to exhibit an awkwardness which betrays the tyro, and to experience a fatigue that practice can only diminish, yet the rake is a tool whose action to the eye is simplicity itself. It is pushed out, it is drawn in, and where is the difficulty of a clean gathering of hay or rubbish? None! an it be handled by an experience that lays the teeth at that correct obtuse angle with the grass or earth which provides a minimum of resistance. But that angle must be attained with certainty by every stroke ere the tyro can work on level terms with the man to whom it has become an instinct born of habit. Now is this always recognised of the many when they offer to a vagrant applying

for relief, a "job" and its pay? A to-be-pitied wretch, in rags and tatters—one possessed perchance of an empty belly, has a tool placed in his hand of which he has had no previous experience. He wields it to the throbs of a desirous heart, but his good-will is coldly and ignorantly measured by the work he performs—he is branded as an idle good-for-nothing. Another castaway of fortune is submitted to the strain of a heavy work for which he is not in physical training, it "drags" him unmercifully: he bears it in silence an hour, two, three—an indefinite period; then he throws down his tools, quits his work, despairing of explanation, and he is labelled a "loafer," a man who will not work because he does not wish to work. To break stones is not difficult for some, but there are those others! And look to them, ye lawgivers of the casual ward.

There is a pleasure born of the righteous performance of *work*. The student testifies to its existence by the exaltation which he experiences at the solution of a problem; and the maidservant who polished the windows of his room, savoured of a gratification more elementary yet as real, when she admired the translucent polish of her handiwork. The many students have overlooked the pleasures of manual labour. Their pleasing thrills of intellect have dwarfed out of sight the humbler pleasures pertaining to the hand. And their restricted perspirations have afforded them but the faintest simulacrum of the satisfaction induced by a beading sweat. A fierce appetite, a dreamless slumber, they admit with longing waits upon labour of muscle. But a lack of manual culture leaves them inexperienced of that titillation of the senses, which is induced by the neat execution of a "job." The gardener, who clips a hedge, models it to the pride of his eyes: the carpenter, who plains a plank, softens its asperities to the gratification of his touch: the engineer, who lubricates his engine, hushes its shrill plaints to the pleasure of his ear: the miner, who cunningly touches with his tongue the clinging magnesite, informs his brain with an eagerly expected knowledge. Our intellects of the day wot not of the reality of such physical pleasures, and fail to comprehend profitably that with the wages for lowermost intellectual work falling from day to day, there is a corresponding rise in the rate of pay for skilled labour of the hands. They will not insure

themselves, by even an elementary culture of the hand, against the contingencies of fall from high estate: it is so, a many times, that they come under the bitter tyranny of the superfluous pen. And that their sons, oftentimes rejected of examinations, drift away to the colonies and a colonial life, unprepared by even the knowledge pertaining to the right keeping of an urban garden. There is never a journalist, keen-eyed as they are in other respects, to point out to these latter the opportunities for advancement that await the gentleman, who will labour with his hand as well as brain in *England*, the land of his birth and intimate acquaintance. Or to direct their sensitive pride of position to some corner of the British Isles, where it may hide itself, pending the process of regilding, a process that will be more certain of success, less expensive of wear and tear, if carried out amongst conditions of life and custom that lie within an Englishman's knowledge. And the brilliant intellect of the New Woman has not yet perceived that sometimes the parlour maid draws better pay and has more leisure to herself than the nursery governess. Or that the rough hand which comes of toil, may be reduced to a delicate gentility of appearance by a plentiful laving of cold water and an emollient application of vaseline.

CIVIC AND MORAL TRAINING IN SCHOOLS.*

MOST school subjects imply not only rules (with reasons where they can be made intelligible) but also exercises. One reason why it is hard to teach history profitably to young boys is, that they cannot "do exercises" in it—that is to say, exercises that are something more than mere repetitions. A pupil learns arithmetic, or Latin, or geometry, by being led up to rules; by seeing his teacher do exercises; but, best of all, by doing exercises himself, with an intelligent knowledge of the principles on which they are based. The most efficacious means of teaching appears to be teaching by exercises.

Rules and Exercises Needful.—This applies to moral and civic training. The "rule" for morality—to love one's neighbour as one loves oneself—is intelligible and simple. The great point is—for all of us, old as well as young—the "exercises." Reading may do something, discourse from a teacher with convictions can do still more; but neither can do much in comparison with the "exercises," many of which—for boys at a day school—are done in the streets, or in the train, and most of all at home. "I don't mind your teaching him the Catechism"—said some parent who did not believe in the Catechism, but who was asking that his son might be admitted into a school where the Catechism was, at the time, indispensable—"You may hammer it into him at school, and I'll hammer it out of him at home; I shan't object." The story is probably legendary; but it understates, rather than exaggerates, an important truth. Moral training in a day school, so far as it is mere book teaching, may be excellent in its way, and yet quite unable to compete with the more powerful training—not "hammering" at all, but much more silent, persistent, and efficacious—of the out-of-school world. I make no apology, then, for speaking first of "exercises" in morality, although there is nothing novel in this part of the subject. If teachers were waiting to give moral and civic

* The following paper was read by the REV. DR. ABBOTT, late Head Master of the City of London School, at the Conference of the N.U.T. in the Merchant Taylor's School, Charterhouse-square, London and afterwards read before the Hampstead Branch of the P.N.E.U.